

CS162

Operating Systems and Systems Programming

Lecture 6

Synchronization

September 20, 2010
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Review: ThreadFork(): Create a New Thread

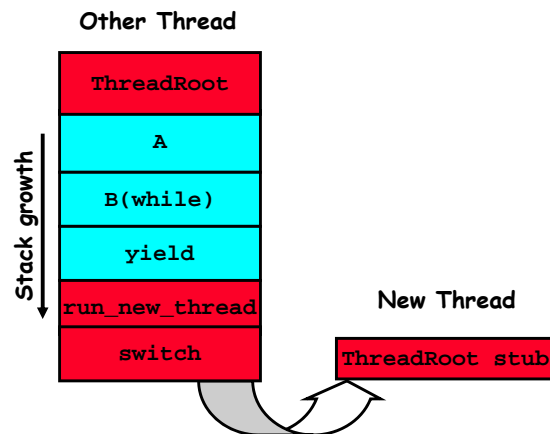
- ThreadFork() is a user-level procedure that creates a new thread and places it on ready queue
- Arguments to ThreadFork()
 - Pointer to application routine (fcnPtr)
 - Pointer to array of arguments (fcnArgPtr)
 - Size of stack to allocate
- Implementation
 - Sanity Check arguments
 - Enter Kernel-mode and Sanity Check arguments again
 - Allocate new Stack and TCB
 - Initialize TCB and place on ready list (Runnable).

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Review: How does Thread get started?



- Eventually, run_new_thread() will select this TCB and return into beginning of ThreadRoot()
 - This really starts the new thread

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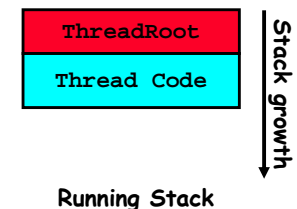
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Review: What does ThreadRoot() look like?

- ThreadRoot() is the root for the thread routine:

```
ThreadRoot() {
  DoStartupHousekeeping();
  UserModeSwitch(); /* enter user mode */
  Call fcnPtr(fcnArgPtr);
  ThreadFinish();
}
```

- Startup Housekeeping
 - Includes things like recording start time of thread
 - Other Statistics
- Stack will grow and shrink with execution of thread
- Final return from thread returns into ThreadRoot() which calls ThreadFinish()
 - ThreadFinish() wake up sleeping threads



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Review: Correctness for systems with concurrent threads

- If dispatcher can schedule threads in any way, programs must work under all circumstances
- **Independent Threads:**
 - No state shared with other threads
 - Deterministic \Rightarrow Input state determines results
 - Reproducible \Rightarrow Can recreate Starting Conditions, I/O
 - Scheduling order doesn't matter (if `switch()` works!!!)
- **Cooperating Threads:**
 - Shared State between multiple threads
 - Non-deterministic
 - Non-reproducible
- Non-deterministic and Non-reproducible means that bugs can be intermittent
 - Sometimes called "**Heisenbugs**"

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Goals for Today

- Concurrency examples
- Need for synchronization
- Examples of valid synchronization

Note: Some slides and/or pictures in the following are adapted from slides ©2005 Silberschatz, Galvin, and Gagne. Many slides generated from my lecture notes by Kubiatowicz.

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Interactions Complicate Debugging

- Is any program truly independent?
 - Every process shares the file system, OS resources, network, etc
 - Extreme example: buggy device driver causes thread A to crash "independent thread" B
- You probably don't realize how much you depend on reproducibility:
 - Example: Evil C compiler
 - » Modifies files behind your back by inserting errors into C program unless you insert debugging code
 - Example: Debugging statements can overrun stack
- Non-deterministic errors are really difficult to find
 - Example: Memory layout of kernel+user programs
 - » depends on scheduling, which depends on timer/other things
 - » Original UNIX had a bunch of non-deterministic errors
 - Example: Something which does interesting I/O
 - » User typing of letters used to help generate secure keys

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Why allow cooperating threads?

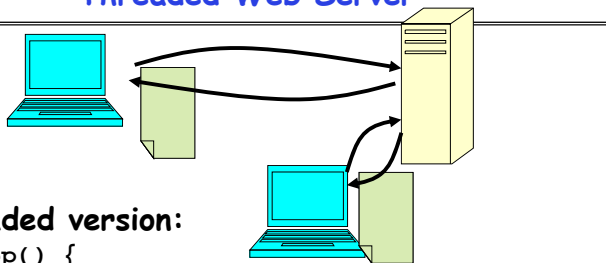
- People cooperate; computers help/enhance people's lives, so computers must cooperate
 - By analogy, the non-reproducibility/non-determinism of people is a notable problem for "carefully laid plans"
- Advantage 1: Share resources
 - One computer, many users
 - One bank balance, many ATMs
 - » What if ATMs were only updated at night?
 - Embedded systems (robot control: coordinate arm & hand)
- Advantage 2: Speedup
 - Overlap I/O and computation
 - » Many different file systems do read-ahead
 - Multiprocessors - chop up program into parallel pieces
- Advantage 3: Modularity
 - More important than you might think
 - Chop large problem up into simpler pieces
 - » To compile, for instance, gcc calls `cpp | cc1 | cc2 | as | ld`
 - » Makes system easier to extend

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Threaded Web Server



- **Multithreaded version:**

```
serverLoop() {  
    connection = AcceptCon();  
    ThreadFork(ServiceWebPage(),connection);  
}
```

- **Advantages of threaded version:**

- Can share file caches kept in memory, results of CGI scripts, other things
- Threads are *much* cheaper to create than processes, so this has a lower per-request overhead
- What if too many requests come in at once?

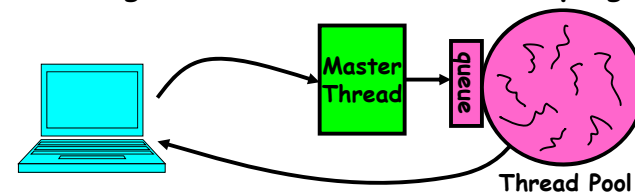
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Thread Pools

- **Problem with previous version: Unbounded Threads**
 - When web-site becomes too popular - throughput sinks
- **Instead, allocate a bounded "pool" of threads, representing the maximum level of multiprocessing**



```
master() {  
    allocThreads(slave,queue);  
    while(TRUE) {  
        con=AcceptCon();  
        Enqueue(queue,con);  
        wakeUp(queue);  
    }  
}  
  
slave(queue) {  
    while(TRUE) {  
        con=Dequeue(queue);  
        if (con==null)  
            sleepOn(queue);  
        else  
            ServiceWebPage(con);  
    }  
}
```

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Administrivia

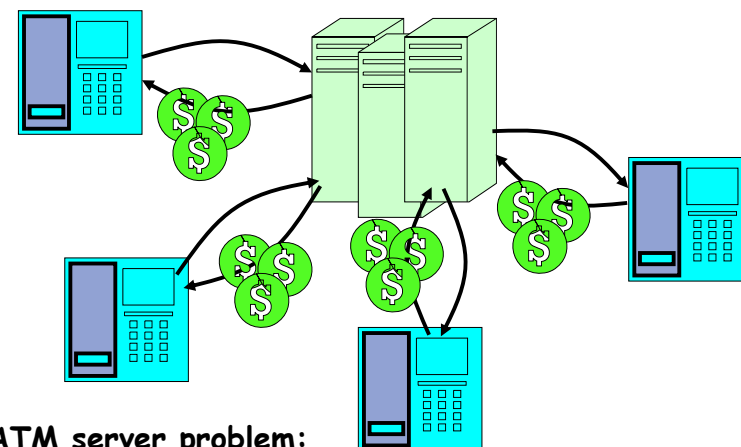
- **Well, the Waitlist is empty!**
 - The waiters managed to outwait everyone else
- **Should be working on first project**
 - Make sure to be reading Nachos code
 - First design document due next Monday! (One week)
 - Set up regular meeting times with your group
 - Let's get group interaction problems solved early
- **Design Document:**
 - Information up on the Nachos page
 - Important inclusion: Testing methodology!
 - » Give us a strategy for testing your code
 - » We will be grading your methodology in the document
- **If you need to know more about synchronization primitives before I get to them, use book!**
 - Chapter 6 (in 7th/8th edition) and Chapter 7 (in 6th edition) are all about synchronization
 - Especially: start reading about Monitors

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ATM Bank Server



- **ATM server problem:**
 - Service a set of requests
 - Do so without corrupting database
 - Don't hand out too much money

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ATM bank server example

- Suppose we wanted to implement a server process to handle requests from an ATM network:

```
BankServer() {
    while (TRUE) {
        ReceiveRequest(&op, &acctId, &amount);
        ProcessRequest(op, acctId, amount);
    }
}

ProcessRequest(op, acctId, amount) {
    if (op == deposit) Deposit(acctId, amount);
    else if ...
}

Deposit(acctId, amount) {
    acct = GetAccount(acctId); /* may use disk I/O */
    acct->balance += amount;
    StoreAccount(acct); /* Involves disk I/O */
}
```

- How could we speed this up?
 - More than one request being processed at once
 - Event driven (overlap computation and I/O)
 - Multiple threads (multi-proc, or overlap comp and I/O)

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Event Driven Version of ATM server

- Suppose we only had one CPU
 - Still like to overlap I/O with computation
 - Without threads, we would have to rewrite in event-driven style

- Example

```
BankServer() {
    while(TRUE) {
        event = WaitForNextEvent();
        if (event == ATMRequest)
            StartOnRequest();
        else if (event == AcctAvail)
            ContinueRequest();
        else if (event == AcctStored)
            FinishRequest();
    }
}
```

- What if we missed a blocking I/O step?
- What if we have to split code into hundreds of pieces which could be blocking?
- This technique is used for graphical programming

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Can Threads Make This Easier?

- Threads yield overlapped I/O and computation without “deconstructing” code into non-blocking fragments
 - One thread per request
- Requests proceeds to completion, blocking as required:

```
Deposit(acctId, amount) {
    acct = GetAccount(actId); /* May use disk I/O */
    acct->balance += amount;
    StoreAccount(acct); /* Involves disk I/O */
}
```

- Unfortunately, shared state can get corrupted:

<u>Thread 1</u>	<u>Thread 2</u>
load r1, acct->balance	load r1, acct->balance
	add r1, amount2
	store r1, acct->balance
add r1, amount1	
store r1, acct->balance	

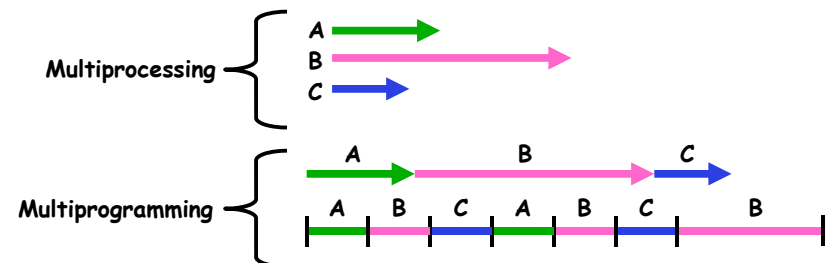
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Review: Multiprocessing vs Multiprogramming

- What does it mean to run two threads “concurrently”?
 - Scheduler is free to run threads in any order and interleaving: FIFO, Random, ...
 - Dispatcher can choose to run each thread to completion or time-slice in big chunks or small chunks



- Also recall: Hyperthreading
 - Possible to interleave threads on a per-instruction basis
 - Keep this in mind for our examples (like multiprocessing)

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Problem is at the lowest level

- Most of the time, threads are working on separate data, so scheduling doesn't matter:

Thread A

x = 1;

Thread B

y = 2;

- However, What about (Initially, y = 12):

Thread A

x = 1;

x = y+1;

Thread B

y = 2;

y = y*2;

- What are the possible values of x?
- Or, what are the possible values of x below?

Thread A

x = 1;

Thread B

x = 2;

- X could be 1 or 2 (non-deterministic!)
- Could even be 3 for serial processors:
 - » Thread A writes 0001, B writes 0010.
 - » Scheduling order ABABABBA yields 3!

Atomic Operations

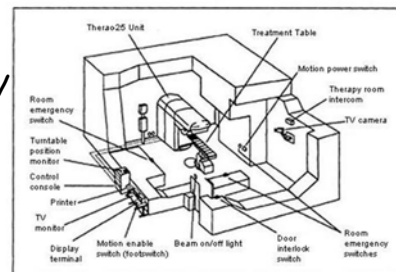
- To understand a concurrent program, we need to know what the underlying indivisible operations are!
- **Atomic Operation:** an operation that always runs to completion or not at all
 - It is *indivisible*: it cannot be stopped in the middle and state cannot be modified by someone else in the middle
 - Fundamental building block - if no atomic operations, then have no way for threads to work together
- On most machines, memory references and assignments (i.e. loads and stores) of words are atomic
 - Consequently - weird example that produces "3" on previous slide can't happen
- Many instructions are not atomic
 - Double-precision floating point store often not atomic
 - VAX and IBM 360 had an instruction to copy a whole array

Correctness Requirements

- Threaded programs must work for all interleavings of thread instruction sequences
 - Cooperating threads inherently non-deterministic and non-reproducible
 - Really hard to debug unless carefully designed!

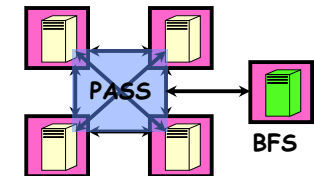
Example: Therac-25

- Machine for radiation therapy
 - » Software control of electron accelerator and electron beam/Xray production
 - » Software control of dosage
- Software errors caused the death of several patients
 - » A series of race conditions on shared variables and poor software design
 - » "They determined that data entry speed during editing was the key factor in producing the error condition: If the prescription data was edited at a fast pace, the overdose occurred."



Space Shuttle Example

- Original Space Shuttle launch aborted 20 minutes before scheduled launch
- Shuttle has five computers:
 - Four run the "Primary Avionics Software System" (PASS)
 - » Asynchronous and real-time
 - » Runs all of the control systems
 - » Results synchronized and compared every 3 to 4 ms
 - The Fifth computer is the "Backup Flight System" (BFS)
 - » stays synchronized in case it is needed
 - » Written by completely different team than PASS
- Countdown aborted because BFS disagreed with PASS
 - A 1/67 chance that PASS was out of sync one cycle
 - Bug due to modifications in **initialization** code of PASS
 - » A delayed init request placed into timer queue
 - » As a result, timer queue not empty at expected time to force use of hardware clock
 - Bug not found during extensive simulation



Another Concurrent Program Example

- Two threads, A and B, compete with each other
 - One tries to increment a shared counter
 - The other tries to decrement the counter

```
Thread A          Thread B
i = 0;            i = 0;
while (i < 10)    while (i > -10)
  i = i + 1;      i = i - 1;
printf("A wins!"); printf("B wins!");
```

- Assume that memory loads and stores are atomic, but incrementing and decrementing are *not* atomic
- Who wins? Could be either
- Is it guaranteed that someone wins? Why or why not?
- What if both threads have their own CPU running at same speed? Is it guaranteed that it goes on forever?

Hand Simulation Multiprocessor Example

Motivation: "Too much milk"

- Great thing about OS's - analogy between problems in OS and problems in real life
 - Help you understand real life problems better
 - But, computers are much stupider than people
- Example: People need to coordinate:



Time	Person A	Person B
3:00	Look in Fridge. Out of milk	
3:05	Leave for store	
3:10	Arrive at store	Look in Fridge. Out of milk
3:15	Buy milk	Leave for store
3:20	Arrive home, put milk away	Arrive at store
3:25		Buy milk
3:30		Arrive home, put milk away

Definitions

- **Synchronization:** using atomic operations to ensure cooperation between threads
 - For now, only loads and stores are atomic
 - We are going to show that its hard to build anything useful with only reads and writes
- **Mutual Exclusion:** ensuring that only one thread does a particular thing at a time
 - One thread *excludes* the other while doing its task
- **Critical Section:** piece of code that only one thread can execute at once. Only one thread at a time will get into this section of code.
 - Critical section is the result of mutual exclusion
 - Critical section and mutual exclusion are two ways of describing the same thing.

More Definitions

- **Lock:** prevents someone from doing something
 - Lock before entering critical section and before accessing shared data
 - Unlock when leaving, after accessing shared data
 - Wait if locked
- For example: fix the milk problem by putting a key on the refrigerator
 - Lock it and take key if you are going to go buy milk
 - Fixes too much: roommate angry if only wants OJ



» Important idea: all synchronization involves waiting



- Of Course - We don't know how to make a lock yet

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Too Much Milk: Correctness Properties

- Need to be careful about correctness of concurrent programs, since non-deterministic
 - Always write down behavior first
 - Impulse is to start coding first, then when it doesn't work, pull hair out
 - Instead, think first, then code
- What are the correctness properties for the "Too much milk" problem???
- Never more than one person buys
- Someone buys if needed
- Restrict ourselves to use only atomic load and store operations as building blocks

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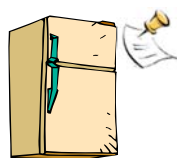
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Too Much Milk: Solution #1

- Use a note to avoid buying too much milk:
 - Leave a note before buying (kind of "lock")
 - Remove note after buying (kind of "unlock")
 - Don't buy if note (wait)
- Suppose a computer tries this (remember, only memory read/write are atomic):

```
if (noMilk) {  
  if (noNote) {  
    leave Note;  
    buy milk;  
    remove note;  
  }  
}
```



- Result?
 - Still too much milk **but only occasionally!**
 - Thread can get context switched after checking milk and note but before buying milk!
- Solution makes problem worse since fails **intermittently**
 - Makes it really hard to debug...
 - Must work despite what the dispatcher does!

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Too Much Milk: Solution #1½

- Clearly the Note is not quite blocking enough
 - Let's try to fix this by placing note first
- Another try at previous solution:

```
leave Note;  
if (noMilk) {  
  if (noNote) {  
    leave Note;  
    buy milk;  
  }  
}  
remove note;
```

- What happens here?
 - Well, with human, probably nothing bad
 - With computer: no one ever buys milk



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Too Much Milk Solution #2

- How about labeled notes?
 - Now we can leave note before checking
- Algorithm looks like this:

Thread A

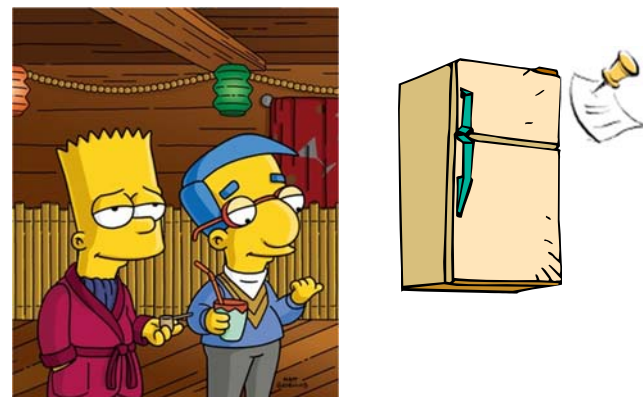
```
leave note A;
if (noNote B) {
  if (noMilk) {
    buy Milk;
  }
}
remove note A;
```

Thread B

```
leave note B;
if (noNoteA) {
  if (noMilk) {
    buy Milk;
  }
}
remove note B;
```

- Does this work?
- Possible for neither thread to buy milk
 - Context switches at exactly the wrong times can lead each to think that the other is going to buy
- Really insidious:
 - **Extremely unlikely** that this would happen, but will at worst possible time
 - Probably something like this in UNIX

Too Much Milk Solution #2: problem!



- *I'm not getting milk, You're getting milk*
- **This kind of lockup is called "starvation!"**

Too Much Milk Solution #3

- Here is a possible two-note solution:

Thread A

```
leave note A;
while (note B) { //X
  do nothing;
}
if (noMilk) {
  buy milk;
}
remove note A;
```

Thread B

```
leave note B;
if (noNote A) { //Y
  if (noMilk) {
    buy milk;
  }
}
remove note B;
```

- Does this work? Yes. Both can guarantee that:
 - It is safe to buy, or
 - Other will buy, ok to quit
- At X:
 - if no note B, safe for A to buy,
 - otherwise wait to find out what will happen
- At Y:
 - if no note A, safe for B to buy
 - Otherwise, A is either buying or waiting for B to quit

Solution #3 discussion

- Our solution protects a single "Critical-Section" piece of code for each thread:

```
if (noMilk) {
  buy milk;
}
```
- Solution #3 works, but it's really unsatisfactory
 - Really complex - even for this simple an example
 - » Hard to convince yourself that this really works
 - A's code is different from B's - what if lots of threads?
 - » Code would have to be slightly different for each thread
 - While A is waiting, it is consuming CPU time
 - » This is called "busy-waiting"
- There's a better way
 - Have hardware provide better (higher-level) primitives than atomic load and store
 - Build even higher-level programming abstractions on this new hardware support

Too Much Milk: Solution #4

- Suppose we have some sort of implementation of a lock (more in a moment).
 - `Lock.Acquire()` - wait until lock is free, then grab
 - `Lock.Release()` - Unlock, waking up anyone waiting
 - These must be atomic operations - if two threads are waiting for the lock and both see it's free, only one succeeds to grab the lock
- Then, our milk problem is easy:

```
milklock.Acquire();
if (nomilk)
    buy milk;
milklock.Release();
```
- Once again, section of code between `Acquire()` and `Release()` called a "**Critical Section**"
- Of course, you can make this even simpler: suppose you are out of ice cream instead of milk
 - Skip the test since you always need more ice cream.

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Where are we going with synchronization?

Programs	Shared Programs			
Higher-level API	Locks	Semaphores	Monitors	Send/Receive
Hardware	Load/Store	Disable Ints	Test&Set	Comp&Swap

- We are going to implement various higher-level synchronization primitives using atomic operations
 - Everything is pretty painful if only atomic primitives are load and store
 - Need to provide primitives useful at user-level

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Summary

- Concurrent threads are a very useful abstraction
 - Allow transparent overlapping of computation and I/O
 - Allow use of parallel processing when available
- Concurrent threads introduce problems when accessing shared data
 - Programs must be insensitive to arbitrary interleavings
 - Without careful design, shared variables can become completely inconsistent
- Important concept: Atomic Operations
 - An operation that runs to completion or not at all
 - These are the primitives on which to construct various synchronization primitives
- Showed how to protect a critical section with only atomic load and store ⇒ pretty complex!

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